

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of claims:

1-31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently amended) A method for inhibiting the expression of a target gene through a post-transcriptional gene silencing mechanism in a cell ~~or organism~~ that expresses the targeted gene, comprising the steps of:

a) providing a composition comprising an mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex prior to contacting said cell ~~or said organism~~, wherein the mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex is ~~used by the cell or organism as a template to generate small gene-silencing effectors~~ capable of inhibiting the expression of said targeted gene in said cell ~~or organism~~, wherein said expression is inhibited through said post-transcriptional gene silencing mechanism, wherein said targeted gene is a β -cantenin gene, and wherein said cell is in the liver or skin of a chicken embryo; and

b) contacting said cell ~~or said organism~~ with said composition under conditions such that the expression of said gene in said cell ~~or said organism~~ is inhibited,

wherein the mRNA is a ribonucleic acid sequence in the sense orientation of said targeted gene and the cDNA is a deoxyribonucleic acid sequence in the anti-sense orientation of said targeted gene, and wherein the mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex forms between said mRNA and said cDNA in a complementary region containing more than 500 base pairs.

33-35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 32, wherein said mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex inhibits the expression of said targeted gene, wherein said

targeted gene comprises a β -catenin sequence encoding its amino acid domain from position 306 to 644.

37-54. (Canceled)

55. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 32, wherein the composition consists of an mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex capable of inhibiting the expression of said targeted gene, wherein the mRNA is a ribonucleic acid sequence in the sense orientation of said targeted gene and the cDNA is a deoxyribonucleic acid sequence in the anti-sense orientation of said targeted gene, wherein the mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex forms between said mRNA and said cDNA in a complementary region containing more than 500 base pairs.

56-59. (Canceled)

60. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 55, wherein said mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex inhibits the expression of said targeted gene, wherein said targeted gene comprises a β -catenin sequence encoding its amino acid domain from position 306 to 644.

61-68. (Canceled)

69. (Currently amended) A method for inhibiting the expression of a target gene through a post-transcriptional gene silencing mechanism in a cell ~~or organism~~ that expresses the targeted gene, comprising the steps of:

a) providing a composition comprising an mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex prior to contacting said cell ~~or said organism~~, wherein the mRNA-cDNA hybrid duplex is ~~used by the cell or organism as a template to generate small gene-silencing effectors~~ capable of inhibiting the expression of said targeted gene in said cell or said organism, wherein said expression is inhibited through said post-transcriptional gene silencing mechanism, wherein said targeted gene is a β -catenin gene, and wherein said cell is in the liver or skin of a chicken embryo; and

b) contacting said cell with said composition under conditions such that the expression of said gene in said cell is inhibited,

wherein the mRNA is a ribonucleic acid sequence in the sense orientation of said targeted gene and the cDNA is a deoxyribonucleic acid sequence in the anti-sense orientation of said targeted gene, and wherein the mRNA is a full-length transcript of said targeted gene larger than 500 base pairs.

70. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein the mRNA is an unspliced mRNA transcript of the targeted gene.

71. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein the mRNA is a spliced mRNA transcript of the targeted gene.